1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH: Iraq Mil

4. INSURRECTION, 1920

669 The disorders which broke out among the 'Iraq tribes in the mid-summer of 1920 were immediately caused by elements partly long familiar in 'Iraq—tribal recalcitrance, love of freedom and loot, self-interested Mujtahid promptings, local shaykhly ambitions or rancours, dislike of taxation, grievances against Government as such—and partly by vigorous and well-financed nationalist propaganda and devotion to that cause. They were facilitated by the dispersal, paucity, and static preoccupations of the British forces, and by a military command sometimes clumsily or tardily exercised, sometimes, rightly or wrongly, unsympathetic to the needs or pleas of the Administration. The resulting insurgence reduced the territory for three months to conditions reminiscent of the Turkish régime in one of its more anarchic periods. These conditions affected in all about one-third of the 'Iraq countryside outside the major towns. They were marked by interruption of communications, refusal of revenue payment, reverses to Government forces, bloodthirsty local assaults, looting of buildings and property. No serious urban disorder occurred.

To the officers of the Administration the episode of the *Thawra* —Insurrection—was one of disillusion and disappointment, the partial undoing of two years of devoted work. To them, as to the military commanders, it was from day to day a period of intense strain, with life and survival immediately at stake. To the British Government it was a reminder that its formulation of policy had, less in itself than by its delays and psychological maladroitness, taken too little account of local discontent, or of the force of 'Iraqi nationalism and its power of popular appeal: a reminder also, if such had been needed, of the need for such a régime in 'Iraq as would, by satisfying major elements in that country, lighten the financial burden devolving on the British taxpayer. To the tribesmen of 'Iraq, who suffered severe casualties without recompense of any kind, it offered, not for the first or last time, a sobering lesson in the thankless consequences of serving the purposes of urban politicians and a Persian priesthood.

The town populations and their political leaders, for all the sincerity and zeal of many, took no physical or practical part in the strife, but profited undisturbed from the security which the Administration was able, in spite of them, to maintain in the cities. They were to claim nevertheless, as their successors a generation later still claim, that this 'National War of Liberation', to which heroic proportions have been assigned, had essentially modified British policy and compelled the creation of an 'Iraqi State. An objective comparison of the constitutional arrangements

1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH1 Iraq MH1

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formulated and, on 17 June 1920, announced *before* the insurrection—arrangements in fact preparatory to an Arab State acting through elected assemblies, 'Iraqi ministers and high officials—and those introduced by Cox in the autumn of the year, does not support this view. The *Thawra*, besides inflicting tragic losses on its participants, delayed by some months the inauguration of the new State. It may, on the other hand, be argued that in some measure it modified the manner of implementation of British policy, and strengthened the case for the approach by treaty rather than by direct mandatory government.

Although operations by the Euphrates tribesmen showed at times signs of tuition or leadership by trained officers—ex-Turkish officers from the Amir Fayṣal's forces—yet in general the course of events was but little co-ordinated. It followed no strategy or synchronization more precise than the mere creation of the maximum disturbance, by tribal agency, whenever and wherever possible. This permitted the Administration to remain in being continuously and in most districts. Even a minimum of unified control over the insurgents' operations must have made the British position untenable, and thus rallied the main body of waverers to the cause of nationalism or of anarchy. The lack of cohesion indicates not only the failure of the political element to provide it, but equally the parochial objectives of the shaykhs, the variety of their motives, their lack of the sense of service to a common cause. More generally the differing viewpoints of Kurd, Turk, Turkoman, and Arab, the irreconcilably varying objectives of Persian Mujtahid, 'Iraqi nationalist, and peace-loving merchant or landlord precluded, as did the essential cleavage of town or tribe, any effective unity of effort. Nor can it be forgotten that throughout 'Iraq a high proportion of leading shaykhs and of urban notables withheld all support from the movement, while throughout the period the loyalty of 'Iraqi forces—police and Shabana—to the Administration was outstanding.

The restoration of peaceful conditions in the territory cost some months of exhausting British military efforts, marked not only by some tragic misadventures but also by episodes of great gallantry and brilliant military prowess. These efforts, which included the summoning of important reinforcements from India, cost hundreds of casualties, great quantities of military stores, the erection of hundreds of blockhouses and scores of miles of barbed-wire fencing, and an expenditure calculated at some £40 million: a greater sum by far than had been spent throughout the War on Arab allies in the Ḥijaz and Syria.

Throughout June 1920 peace throughout 'Iraq was, except for some aftermath of the Tall 'Afar murders, still undisturbed. It

1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH1 Iraq MH1

669 was thought indeed by some observers to be assured by the failure of the tribal forces outside Mosul, the announcement of British policy in Baghdad on 17 June, the forthcoming return of Cox, and the timely arrest of patriot-agitators at Baghdad, Karbalā, Ḥilla, and Diwaniya, whence in some numbers they were dispatched to Hanjam Island in the Persian Gulf. But such hopes were to be falsified; an eruption of violent lawlessness—one of so many in 'Iraq's long history—was not now avoidable. A petty episode at Rumaytha on the lower Euphrates, unconnected at first with nationalist or any other politics, led in the first week of July to the cutting of the Baghdad–Baṣra railway near this town and near Samawa. Both towns, or the Government buildings in them, were closely besieged by tribesmen. The first and determined efforts of British troops to reach Rumaytha were unsuccessful. It was relieved on 20 July only after serious fighting, and immediately abandoned. The Mishkhab marsh area tribes attacked Abu Ṣukhayr on 13 July, and a week later besieged Kufa, when Captain J. S. Mann was killed by tribesmen. Kifl was assailed and a column of the Manchester Regiment, sent hastily from Ḥilla to its relief, by ill fortune and its own unpreparedness sustained heavy losses in killed and prisoners which raised the spirit and hopes of the insurgent tribes. The Hindiya Barrage and Musayib were evacuated, to be reoccupied in mid-August. British troops were withdrawn with great difficulty from Diwaniya to Ḥilla, south of which the Euphrates channels and townships passed for some weeks out of control. In the Muntafiq, the political offices at Shaṭra, Qal'at Sikr, and Suq al-Shuyukh were perforce abandoned during August, and except at the liwā headquarters, Naṣiriya, a régime of non-Government, but never of concerted insurgent action, prevailed for some weeks. The railway was interrupted, a train looted, two military river steamers (the *Greenfly* and the *S.9*) were destroyed and their crews cold-bloodedly murdered; nevertheless, nuclei of loyalty to the Administration remained under the most powerful of the Muntafiq shaykhs, and conditions could return without military action to something like normality in mid-October.

Disorder at no time spread to the Kut or the 'Amara areas of the lower Tigris, nor, save for isolated episodes which included the destruction by sabotage of the main Motor Transport Stores, to Baghdad city and suburbs: nor, in spite of agitators' efforts, to Baṣra. Mosul and its dependent Kurdish districts were untroubled, in spite of violent trans-frontier propaganda and some formidable tribal raiding. Sulaymaniya, a stranger to 'Iraqi nationalism and chastened by the events of 1919, held aloof. In Kirkuk liwā there was keen tension but no outbreak, except at

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Kifri, which tribesmen occupied for a few days late in August, and whose Assistant Political Officer, Captain G. H. Salmon, they imprisoned and then murdered. In Arbil liwā the Administration under Turkish-fomented pressure withdrew from outlying qadhās, Raniya, Keui Sanjaq, Baṭas; but, aided by the loyalty of leading Aghās, it could maintain itself in the city and surrounding country. The upper Euphrates was held secure by the influence of the Dulaym and 'Aniza shaykhs, until the sordidly treacherous murder of Leachman on 12 August led to local risings, the looting and isolation of 'Ana and other villages, and the withdrawal of the Administration for a time from Hit. The position was restored with the arrival of small military columns and the re-occupation of Hit on 8 October; but the Dulaym area remained partly disorganized for a further half-year.

Around Samarrā propaganda emanating from that Holy City led to a measure of tribal uprising and, late in August, to an unsuccessful assault on the city. In other areas north and east of Baghdad the forces of violence were for a time dominant and rewarded. The liwā headquarters, Ba'quba, and the qadhā towns of Shahroban and Daltawa were successively attacked, occupied, and partially looted by tribesmen under politicians' inspiration in mid-August, and British officers cold-bloodedly murdered—Captain W. T. Wrigley, Lieutenant J. T. Bradfield, Captain E. L. Buchanan, and two British Levy instructors—or politely imprisoned. Here and at Mandali on the frontier hopeful Provisional Governments were set up. The Turkoman-Kurdish towns of Qizil Rubaṭ and Khaniqin were entered and occupied in the same week by the local Kurdish tribesmen. Attacks on the Assyrian refugee camp at Ba'quba were hotly repulsed, by far better fighters than the attackers.

In these accessible areas of central 'Iraq it was easy for the military command, which by the later weeks of September disposed of stronger forces and had regained the initiative, to restore the Administration and to punish the insurgents by the visitations of mobile columns. Disorder here, to the general relief of the public and, not least, of the Baghdad landlords, languished and died; but the agitation and internecine quarrels among the Diyalā tribes remained largely unappeased for a further year. The 'government' of Mandali disappeared early in 1921, the tribal invaders of Kifri and Khaniqin were reduced to hunted outlaws, and calm returned to the urban and suburban populations of the Diyalā and Baghdad townships.

On the middle and lower Euphrates British troops could show themselves in respectable force in the first weeks of October. It was possible to restore the prestige of the Administration in Najf and Karbalā and to relieve besieged Samawa and Kufa, where a

1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH1 Iraq MH1

669 Provisional Government had existed for some weeks and from which the British prisoners captured in July, of the Manchesters and other regiments, were recovered in good condition.

A variety of minor punitive expeditions were led in the little-visited marsh country, and military marches and demonstrations carried out throughout the winter of 1920–1. Communications including the Baghdad–Baṣra railway were progressively restored. Loyal tribal leaders were thanked and rewarded. The submission of ex-insurgents was accepted, save for some few who, through fear or principle, fled to Syria or the Ḥijaz. Fines of rifles imposed on tribes by the Commander-in-Chief were effectively collected; some 70,000, including 21,000 of modern type, were handed in within six months by mid-Euphrates tribesmen alone. From the Muntafiq, exceptionally, no arms were collected, and only one expedition in January 1921 visited the Gharraf.

In mid-October Sir Percy Cox returned to 'Iraq as planned to relieve Wilson, his deputy, and to carry out the constitutional programme announced four months earlier. After consultations in southern 'Iraq, he reached Baghdad on 11 October and could rightly wonder, in a proclamation issued on 17 October, what aims the few still active insurgent tribesmen could be seeking. The attempt of the Mujtahids to regain a seriously though but temporarily shaken position by claiming to act as mediators between the Government and the Shi'i tribesmen was frustrated by Cox's refusal. Week by week conditions normalized, and the deferred progress in State-building could be resumed.

5. THE KING

642 Immediate 'complete independence' for 'Iraq formed no part of the programme which Cox was to carry out; after the failure of the insurrectionist movement organized to obtain it, and the collapse in July 1920 of the Amir Fayṣal's Government in Syria, even its warmest advocate could now scarcely expect it. A Mandate for 'Iraq had been accepted by Great Britain, with all the tutelage which that, however interpreted, must involve; the belated Treaty of Sèvres with Turkey, signed on 10 August 1920, was to permit the 'Iraqi Kurds to adhere, if they wished, to the State into which central Kurdistan might or might not evolve. Cox himself and his advisers, however sympathetic to 'Iraqi aspirations, were convinced that the intended substitution of 'Iraqi for British government, must, for soundness and permanence, be gradual and progressive; indeed, the actual British Administration visibly operating in every department, liwā, and qaḍhā was a reality which no politics could, for the moment, dissipate. At the same time the more prudent programme of erecting an 'Iraqi Administration,

1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH1 Iraq MH1

563 668 murderous Hamawand allies. The Shaykh's retirement to Persia removed for a time the greatest obstacle to orderly government in Sulaymaniya liwā. It could now be resumed, with improved roads and rebuilt police posts. His son, Baba 'Ali, was brought to school in Baghdad—and later to Victoria College, Alexandria—as part of the terms of settlement; he was, years later, to become a graduate of Columbia, and a minister of the Government. The place of Shaykh Maḥmud as leading Kurdish disturber of the peace was taken in the same year, 1927, by Shaykh Aḥmad of Barzan in whose territory 'Iraqi troops had recently manœuvred. This half-witted Dere Bey, obscurely prompted by some resentful megalomania, now proclaimed himself Almighty and gained some converts by the preaching of a devoted Mullā. But the reaction of horrified listeners led to a scuffle in which lives, including his brother's, were lost. It was followed by an intervention of police and the reinforcement of the Army garrison at Bilih, near Barzan. The new religion died out; but the Shaykh, talking and writing war and sedition to all who would listen and spreading rumours of Assyrian trespass, remained a menacing figure.

The Kurdish reaction in 1929–30 to threatened British withdrawal was one of apprehension. The elections of September 1929 produced, as has been recorded, a riot in Sulaymaniya; questions had been asked already by the Kurds in the 'Iraq Parliament as to safeguarding in the new Treaty the 'rights of the Kurdish areas', and had been answered only by the Treaty's silence on the subject. 563 669 721 Expecting support based on the same claims, Shaykh Maḥmud in September 1930 again invaded 'Iraq territory, in spite of specific warnings to desist. He established himself, addressed the High Commissioner to demand a united Kurdistan under British Mandate to stretch from Zakho to Khaniqin, and again occupied Panjwin. Troops of the 'Iraq Army, with Royal Air Force bombers, dislodged him successively from Panjwin and Sardasht, but failed for some months to encircle or drive him across the frontier. Guerrilla war continued through the winter of 1930–1. In March his movement to raise the tribes of Kifri and Khaniqin was stopped by a concerted operation of the Army, Police, and Air Force, and a major engagement took place at Au-i-Barika twenty miles north-east of Ṭuz Khurmatu, leaving a score of dead. The Shaykh fled into Persia, but thanks to preventive action by the Persian Government failed to find there his usual refuge. At an interview at Panjwin terms were once more arranged. His life was spared, an allowance granted, and his place of residence fixed at Naṣiriya on the lower Euphrates.

Between 1928 and 1931 an uneasy peace reigned in Barzan country, where the Shaykh was visited by an Administrative

1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH1 Iraq MH1

Inspector and received the admonitions of Baghdad. In July of the latter year he again lost his wits, accepted and imposed 'Christianity', and ordered his scared followers to conform to his new faith by roasting and eating pork. A number of the horrified retinue obeyed; but a neighbour, Shaykh Rashid of Baradost, expressed his disapproval by raids which kindled all the fires of tribal warfare. Shaykh Aḥmad's brother, Mullā Muṣṭafā, and other well-wishers tried in vain by diplomacy to extinguish them: but he himself, restored to the Muslim faith, led forays of unusual savagery into Baradost country. By December intervention by regular troops was ordered, in spite of the wintry conditions. An 'Iraq Army column, penetrating the mountains as far as the Shaykh's village, was there severely defeated and indeed rescued from débâcle only by Air Force intervention. Aḥmad, chastened by severe bombing, released the prisoners he had taken, protested humble obedience, and withdrew from Baradost country. But he remained unsubdued. In the early spring of 1932, after warnings from the High Commissioner which he ignored, 'Iraqi troops again advanced into his country, occupied Margasur, and threatened Barzan; but a sudden assault on them by tribesmen in difficult country involved them in a second defeat and heavy losses. The R.A.F. was again able decisively to intervene, and a second 'Iraqi column, with strong air support, now occupied Barzan and much of its dependent territory. After a pause for the release of a captured pilot, and further attempts at peace-making on generous terms, land and air operations were resumed. In midsummer the Shaykh, driven finally to bay, crossed into Turkish territory, where he was arrested and removed from the frontier. It was then possible to install a normal or nearly normal administration in Barzan country, with police posts and patrols, and to pardon the miserable remnant of the Shaykh's followers who trickled back.

If these warlike interludes were of a type normal in Kurdistan for millennia, the same is less true of the political action now taken by Kurdish leaders. A petition to Geneva by ten notables of Sulaymaniya in July 1930 demanded a League-supervised Kurdish Government. The Permanent Mandates Commission commented that the League had never envisaged a Kurdish Government but merely a measure of 'special treatment', of which it urged the Mandatary to ensure full application before it be too late. A series of further and similar Kurdish petitions, written in 1930 to 1931, were considered at Geneva in the latter year. They led to the recommendation that Britain should impress on the 'Iraq Government the need of tolerance to evoke the loyalty of its Kurdish subjects: who in turn, however, should earn respect and the League's consideration by a correct attitude to the 'Iraqi Kingdom.

1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH1 Iraq MH1

But the Euphrates ferment could not be so easily cooled. If one major faction was satisfied by the advent to power of the Ikhā, its rivals were with reason suspicious of a Ministry whose opponents they had recently supported. Yasin Pasha's repudiation of all party preferences, his promise of Deputies' seats to ex-opponents and his dissolution of the Ikhā Party itself were unconvincing. The attempted use of Kashif al-Ghaṭā as pacifier was not successful. The 'Alim was simultaneously approached by the group hostile to 'Abd al-Waḥid, but was unwilling to offend his former friends and temporized. But his completed list of Shi'i demands, not in itself immoderate, created indignation in Sunni circles of Baghdad; and other Shi'i spiritual influence, added to the movements of anti-Ikhā politicians in Baghdad, was not absent from the incitements to further tribal trouble-making which were visible as early as April, and bore fruit in the later spring and summer of 1935.

The first outbreak came in May from the Bani Zurayj near Rumaytha, a traditional storm-centre. Here, with a background of vengeful land disputes and the encouragements of absentee politicians, the arrest of a minor 'Alim led to a rising. The railway line was cut, a Government office seized, appeals for help broadcast. But the Government this time acted quickly. Forces under General Bakr Ṣidqi bombed and dispersed the rebels, captured Shaykh Khawwam al-Ḥajj 'Abbas their leader, and entered Rumaytha. The expected allies from lower Euphrates tribes failed to rally to the rebels' support. But the movement had spread southwards, tribesmen in the Suq al-Shuyukh area were 'out', had cut the line at Tall al-Laḥm and Ur, burnt Government records at 'Ukayka, and fought successfully with the police. The history of the Bani Zurayj and Rumaytha was repeated. Bakr Ṣidqi's troops and aircraft, moving with ruthless speed and spirit, by-passed broken communications (which the frightened tribesmen hastened to repair) and entered Samawa and then Suq. Scores of arrests were made. Nine death sentences and some dozens of imprisonments were pronounced by courts martial[1]—with little discrimination, it was said, between innocent and guilty. The success of the campaign did much, but not enough and not permanently, to correct the subversive and centrifugal tribal spirit which, with sad unwisdom, the politicians of Baghdad had themselves encouraged.

In other tribal unrest of 1935 and 1936 fear of the application of conscription was a major element. Among the Yazidis, who had passed three quieter years, Government saw fit to make no con-

[1] Recourse to martial law, legalized by Ordinance in 1935, was frequent in the period now opening and led to scores or hundreds of rough-and-ready trials by courts martial.

1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH1 Iraq MH1

cessions to their peculiar beliefs and customs, and met their active and passive resistance by sending a brigade of troops in September 1935. This bloodless operation was followed by the institution of courts martial which, with savage severity and no adequate trials, hanged nine of their leaders, including two Christians, and imprisoned 350 alleged resisters. These were later progressively released: but Da'ud al-Da'ud remained a fugitive in Syria, where numbers of his followers tried persistently to join him. The Barzani Kurds, subdued by joint 'Iraqi-Turkish operations in 1933 which captured Shaykh Aḥmad, gave further trouble in 1934 and 1935 under the truculent leader of a considerable force, Khalil Khushawi. This bandit, who for long defied the combined operations of 'Iraqis and Turks, dodged across frontiers from valley to valley and destroyed the villages of all who denounced him. Later in 1935 most of his followers were rounded up, and a dozen hanged; he himself vanished, to reappear in mid-winter and to be caught and shot in March 1936. In Sulaymaniya liwā a similar character, Sayid Muḥammad Pichkola, led looting parties in 'Iraq from a base in Persia. After long-drawn police operations he surrendered in August 1935, and was pardoned. In the same weeks, deep in southern 'Iraq, resistance to conscription was leading the Mudayna village of Qurna to armed protest which called for military suppression.

The year 1936 brought no peace to rural 'Iraq. The incitements to lawlessness first set afoot in 1934, the rancour of never-settled land disputes, the fear and hatred of conscription, and maladroit or corrupt local administration were added to the endemic causes of tribal restlessness. In February insurgence among the Shaṭra tribes brought troops to the Gharraf, and the usual measures quelled the rising in a few weeks. In the Muntafiq an assault on a police post in the Suq area was punished by fines and prison-sentences. In April a section of the Bani Ḥuchaym in Rumaytha district cut the railway, rallied a force of 1,200 armed tribesmen, and heavily engaged troops sent to suppress them. Casualties were heavy, the Army lost ninety men and two aircraft. Reprisals of corresponding severity, with the hanging of rebel leaders after little or no trial and the burning of villages, were reported in Baghdad, there to distress the squeamish and help the Opposition. The 'Akra district of Diwaniya witnessed a rising of the notorious Sha'lan al-'Aṭiya, unsatisfied by his rewards for opposing the Ministry of 'Ali Jawdat. It was not less brutally suppressed by Bakr Ṣidqi in June 1936; and in August a force of the Ṣafwan tribe, near Khidhr in Samawa qadhā, attacked the Government office and, though dispersed, were still unsubdued in the autumn of the year.

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tact with leaders of the Army. The latter, its morale uplifted by triumphs over Assyrian villagers and Euphrates tribesmen, was asking whether to serve the intrigues and ambitions of the Baghdad politicians was, after all, the ideal: whether direct dominance of the State by its armed force, as in Turkey or Persia, would not be more congenial? The stages by which Ḥikmat Sulayman and the forceful sinister Bakr Ṣidqi came into closer agreement, and the latter abandoned his loyalty to Yasin Pasha and his brother Ṭaha, cannot now be traced. To Ḥikmat the immediate desideratum was a change of Government in his own favour, and only the Army could produce this; Bakr Ṣidqi's ambition was to effect a stroke which would assure the Army of a paramount position and himself the headship of the Army. Neither at any time sought, it seems, a personal or formal dictatorship.

In October 1936 Ṭaha left 'Iraq to visit Turkey, leaving Ṣidqi, then commanding the 1st Division, to act in his place. The autumn manœuvres on the middle Diyalā gave occasion to concentrate almost all of the armed forces outside the capital. The plot concerted by Bakr with Ḥikmat Sulayman was communicated to a few officers at Qaraghan, notably 'Abd al-Laṭif Nuri, the general commanding the 2nd Division. The two generals drafted a letter to the King, demanding the formation of a new Ministry under Ḥikmat, and handed it to the latter. Leaders of the left-wing group were admitted to the secret. The Air Force under its Commander, Muḥammad 'Ali Juwad, a close friend of Ṣidqi, was concentrated at Qaraghan and was provided with leaflets to scatter over Baghdad at the appropriate moment. On the night of 28 October the Army, renamed the National Defence Force for the occasion, began its 'march on Baghdad'.

By early morning of the 29th leaflets rained from the sky over Baghdad, and Ḥikmat conveyed the agreed letter to the palace. Yasin Pasha and his colleagues, amazed at a turn of events wholly unexpected, made their way to the King's ante-room, where Ghazi had already summoned the British Ambassador. The latter advised His Majesty to consult his Cabinet, to ascertain the intentions of Ḥikmat, and to proceed, above all, constitutionally. The ministers, now joined by all their colleagues except Rashid 'Ālī, were ready to resign. Bombs fell on Baghdad in the mid-morning, a three-hour time limit for the Cabinet's surrender having expired, and some civilians killed and wounded showed the zeal of the Royal 'Iraqi Air Force. After a discussion which could end but one way, the Cabinet resigned, and a Royal Irada appointed Ḥikmat Sulayman to form a new Ministry.

One shocking incident distressed the public, horrified the British Ambassador, and disgusted Ḥikmat himself—the brutal murder of

1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH1 Iraq MH1

665 669 Ja'far Pasha al-'Askari by Army officers half-way between Baghdad and Ba'quba, under the direct orders, it was believed, of Bakr Ṣidqi. Ja'far as Minister of Defence had left Baghdad by car with a letter to Bakr from the King, intending to meet the Commander, inform him of the change of Government and arrange for a cessation of violence. His body, that of a sincere and devoted patriot and an honest man, was hastily buried by the roadside while the Army pursued its triumphant march to the capital. The troops entered the city ceremonially in the early evening, with Bakr Ṣidqi at their head.

*645 The Cabinet formed and announced by Ḥikmat on the same day reserved the Ministry of Interior to himself, brought three members of the Ahali group, Abu al-Timman, Kamil al-Chadirchi, and Yusif 'Izz al-Din to Finance, Works, and Education, Ṣaliḥ Jabr to Justice, Naji al-Aṣil to Foreign Affairs. Ṣidqi's fellow conspirator 'Abd al-Laṭif Nuri was rewarded with the Ministry of Defence, while Bakr himself superseded Ṭaha al-Hashimi as Chief of Staff. Great enthusiasm, real or feigned, greeted the new Government. The announced programme, and a broadcast by Abu al-Timman, were rich in optimism and promises. Giant demonstrations were arranged in Baghdad, and the capital's main streets were a stage for the dancing and singing of crowds of tribesmen and workers. The outgoing Ministry was everywhere denigrated. Its members, whom Bakr would have preferred to assassinate with other likely opponents, vanished temporarily from public life: Yasin Pasha and Rashid 'Āli to Syria under escort, Nuri Sa'id by R.A.F. aircraft to Egypt. Other ex-ministers and some high officials retired amid the many changes made in personnel by the incoming ministers.

The Prime Minister, who kept at all times correctly in contact with the British Ambassador—and lost some nationalist following by so doing—assured him and the world that this was no military dictatorship; it was merely parliamentary and democratic government supported by a devoted Army. Bakr Ṣidqi, in fact, interfered little in current administration. He had no obvious policy save a crude Anglophobia, and limited his exigencies to nomination of his friends to certain appointments and insistence on priority for the Army's needs. A vindictive proposal to inquire into the private fortunes of ex-ministers was at first accepted but finally abandoned.

*645 665 Opposition nevertheless was not slow to organize, and could muster effective elements. Moderate opinion everywhere saw with consternation the open assumption of power by a selfish and short-sighted military movement. The new Government in its proclaimed programme had said little of anti-Treaty proposals—indeed, had spoken of friendship with all countries and was pledged to maintain the Treaty. In spite of some self-justifying gestures to

1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH1 Iraq MH1

the French reception in Syria of the families of the 550 Assyrians interned there since August 1933. Aided by a grant of money from 'Iraq, these women and children joined their men on the upper Khabur in September 1934 to a number of over 1,500. Movement from the Mosul camp and streets to the Khabur continued in 1935 to a number of some 1,500, and a more grandiose scheme for a large-scale settlement in the Ghab lands on the Orontes in Syria was formulated by the League Committee. A project for its finances, with 'Iraq and Great Britain as main contributors, was established and a Trustee Board appointed. In 1936 an immediate transfer of 15,000 Assyrians was planned, which would dispose of almost the whole remaining community except those native to 'Iraq; but the difficulties of the Ghab project were found insurmountable, and its abandonment made possible a move only of smaller numbers, 2,500 in all, to the Khabur settlements. No further progress was made under the Ḥikmat–Ṣidqi régime, and the permanence of the Assyrian remnant in 'Iraq was perforce accepted. Their economic rehabilitation was by now fairly advanced, and their final adaptation to 'Iraqi conditions and citizenship could be hoped.

The event which caused the fall of the Sulaymani Ministry after less than nine months of uneasy life was due neither to constitutional procedures, which rarely operated to change Governments in 'Iraq, nor to any grouping of the Opposition forces. Its origin lay in rancour within the Army itself, where careers had been ruined and malevolence excited by the abused omnipotence of Bakr. The bodyguard by which at all times he went surrounded had saved him from previous attempts on his life during 1937; but when on 8 August, *en route* for a visit to Turkish manœuvres, he waited on the Mosul airport, his murderers, by whomever instructed, could carry out one of the alternative plans prepared. He was shot dead at point-blank range by an 'Iraqi soldier, and his companion Muḥammad 'Ali Juwad, chief of the R.I.A.F., lived but a minute longer.

The bodies were taken to Baghdad and buried with full military honours. Little regret, but rather the almost unanimous relief of public and press, accompanied the General to his grave: not unjustly, since the pages of 'Iraq history which he had written were in all ways deplorable. In Mosul the Military Commander, General Amin al-'Umari, arrested the murderer, cordoned the airport, and assumed sole charge of the city. Ordered by Baghdad to arrest further named individuals as accomplices, he at first complied, then realized the dangerous possibilities of a general purge of Bakr's known opponents. Six days after the murder he took the grave step of publishing a proclamation in which he

1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH1 Iraq MH1

Nuri Pash, perhaps with the reluctance which he professed, accepted the premiership for the fifth time on Christmas Day 1938. 645×

2. DEATH OF THE KING

The new Ministry was greeted by the usual hopes for a firm and stable régime at last, the usual apprehension of faction, reprisal, and further military intervention. A Cabinet of average merit was announced; but once again no firm basis of shared principles was present to unite the ministers. Naji Shawkat was summoned from the 'Iraqi Legation at Ankara to be Minister of the Interior, Rustum Ḥaydar went to Finance, the capable Turkoman, 'Umar Nadhmi, to Works, Maḥmud Ṣubḥi al-Daftari to Justice, Ṣaliḥ Jabr to Education, Ṭaha al-Hashimi to Defence. Rashid 'Ali was taken to preside over the Royal Diwan. The Prime Minister's inaugural speech was admirably balanced, wise, and high-minded; it deprecated military adventures and urged all parties to accept the rule of law and true democracy. The banned newspapers were relicensed, the exiled politicians returned. Postal censorship was abolished, dismissed officials were reinstated, and permission was given for the formation of political parties, though these failed for the moment to take shape. Words of mingled reproof and encouragement were addressed to assembled Euphrates shaykhs.

In Parliament, however, the usual asperities were not slow to repeat themselves, and redoubled after the departure of Nuri Pasha to London early in 1939. The exiled victims of the Madfa'i Ministry demanded vengeance for its high-handed illegalities, and as a first step pressed for reference of disputed points of law to the Special Court provided by the Organic Law; and the Ministry, itself indifferently united, decided to reinforce its position by general elections which might produce a more amenable Chamber. The Irada ordering the dissolution of Parliament appeared on 22 February, a few days before the State visit paid to Baghdad by the Crown Prince of Persia. 646 665

The return of the Prime Minister from London late in February was followed by the issue of a ministerial programme on the habitual lines. A few days later the discovery of a conspiracy was announced, understood to involve not only Ḥikmat Sulayman—the *bête noire* of Nuri Pasha—but a formidable list of other politicians and officers. The plot, it was revealed, had aimed at the murder of no less than fifty leading personalities, the assassination of the King, and the enthronement of his first cousin, the Amir 'Abd al-Ilah—or, as some preferred, of the Amir Zayd. A State of Emergency was immediately proclaimed at al-Rashid Camp, a number of arrests were made, and a special court martial was convened with civilian judges as equal members with the military. On the strength of 645× 669

1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH1 Iraq MH1

confessions made by alleged participants, death sentences were passed on five of the accused, including Ḥikmat, and long terms of imprisonment on others, while some were acquitted. The commutation of the death sentence for one of imprisonment on four of the condemned was soon afterwards announced by Royal Irada; that of Ḥikmat Sulayman was mitigated only after persuasive pressure by the British Ambassador and by private British as well as 'Iraqi friends. There remained—and remain today—among persons well qualified to judge, many who, in spite of the confessions, believed and believe the whole plot to be fictitious and its 'discovery' designed merely to serve political or personal ends.

A part of the objects of the alleged conspiracy was after all to be achieved, and this by a tragic accident. The King, driving his car with habitual recklessness late in the night of 3 April, crashed into an electric-power standard near his palace, and died a few hours later of the severe fractures of the skull which he had sustained. The announcement of his death was made early on the 4th. The Council of Ministers, urgently convened, received the written testimony of Queen 'Aliya that Ghazi had wished to be succeeded, should the case ever arise during the infancy of his son, by a Regency of his first cousin, the Amir 'Abd al-Ilah, son of the late King 'Ali. A sufficient number of members of the dissolved Chamber were gathered to ratify this in accordance with the Constitution; and the succession of King Faysal II, then aged almost four years, and the Regency of the Amir were proclaimed.

King Ghazi was twenty-seven. He had reigned for nearly six years. Little interested in the formal functions of his office, and barely persuaded to fulfil them, his faults of heedlessness and frivolity, his impatience of protocol and of advice, had been embarrassing to his successive Governments, and at times discourteous to his subjects. But at his best he lacked neither intelligence nor charm. He was a good sportsman, a brilliant high-speed motor driver, and popular with the young Army officers who were his chosen and natural associates. He was beloved, at a distance, by many of his subjects for his youth, vitality, and evident patriotism. The little Faysal II, attended always by an English nurse and later an English governness, was known to be an intelligent and attractive child. The new Regent, brother of Queen 'Aliya and uncle of the King, was now aged twenty-seven. He had been educated at Victoria College, Alexandria, and although hitherto unversed in public affairs was considered serious and intelligent, and likely to turn his personal charm and excellent social gifts to good account.

The King's funeral at the Royal Mausoleum was attended by many Arab visitors from abroad and by tens of thousands of his

1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH1 Iraq MH1

Ministry itself was well received by Parliament, gained some popularity by increasing officials' salaries, and worked acceptably at salvage and relief works necessitated by the disastrous floods which had breached the railway and inundated farm lands. It felt strong enough to refuse the application of Rashid 'Ālī and his band of close associates—Naji Shawkat, 'Ali Maḥmud al-Shaykh, Muḥammad 'Ali Maḥmud, Yunis al-Sab'awi, Da'ud al-Sa'di—for the formation of a People's Party.

But the task of conciliating the Army leaders, the Gaylani group of politicians hungry for power and embittered against the Regent, and the Amir himself with his moderate and orthodox advisers, proved impossible of achievement. The Prime Minister could not or would not adopt a determined policy in either sense. The Golden Square, who had already abandoned their loyalty to Nuri, now abandoned it to Ṭaha equally, and were identified ever more closely with Rashid 'Ālī's faction. They felt their own position to be threatened; and the first stroke they had been led to fear fell on 26 March with the announced transfer of one of them, Kamil Shabib, away from Baghdad; other repostings were no doubt to follow, and the Regent's campaign to break the Square would develop. The order of transfer was ignored; Ṭaha was powerless to enforce it; and the solemn promise of the Generals on the last day of the Parliamentary session, 31 March, that 'on their military honour' they would abstain from political intervention, was obviously valueless.

On the night of 1 April the four Generals and the acting Chief of Staff, Amin Zaki Sulayman, met to proclaim a State of Emergency at al-Rashid cantonment, and marched troops to points in Baghdad city and around the Palace. Their spokesmen, visiting Ṭaha by night, demanded his resignation; but he refused to join a movement now frankly revolutionary, and his Cabinet remained in being for one further day. Events, however, swept it aside; the Regent escaped from his palace on the night of 1 April and took refuge for some hours with Knabenshue, who drove him to Ḥabbaniya in an American Legation car next day. Here he met for a few minutes Sir Kinahan Cornwallis, arriving at this most uneasy of moments to assume the post of British Ambassador, and from Ḥabbaniya was flown to Baṣra. There were hopes that a strong base of support might be found at the Port, and the Amir issued a manifesto calling for this. But the Baṣra garrison, hesitant at first, received orders from Baghdad to detain him, and arrested and replaced the Mutaṣarrif, Ṣaliḥ Jabr, who had loyally received him. He was forced to embark for safety in a British warship anchored in the Shaṭṭ, and was later flown, with 'Ali Jawdat and Madfa'i, to 'Amman.

1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH1 Iraq MH1

5. THIRTY-DAY WAR

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In Baghdad the Golden Square and its forces assumed control. Once fully dominant, the Generals proclaimed the formation of a Government of National Defence, embodied in a Council which included their own four members and the Chief of Staff, with Rashid ʿĀli as its nominal head, accompanied by two of his close followers. General Amin Zaki issued on 3 April, in terms strongly hostile to the Regent, a broadcast appealing for universal support. He was followed by Rashid ʿĀli, who justified his position and the Army's and stated his policy to be one of 'refraining from exposing the country to the dangers of war', while also 'fulfilling all the international obligations of 'Iraq'.

The legislation of the new régime was less easy. Parliament was summoned by one of its Vice-Presidents, ʿAlwan al-Yasiri: a step in itself illegal, since under the Constitution a Royal Irada was required. At the meeting of the Chamber on 10 April Rashid ʿĀli obtained from the frightened deputies (many in fact strongly favourable to the Amir ʿAbd al-Ilah) their votes for the deposition of the Regent, and for the appointment in his place of an elderly but respectable poor relation of the Hashimite family, the Amir Sharaf. The Prime Minister swore henceforward to observe the Constitution, the new Regent took his oath of office, and the régime announced itself as now legally constituted. The Amir Sharaf accepted the resignation of Ṭaha, three days old, and called formally upon Rashid ʿĀli to form a Ministry. The portfolio of Finance was allotted to Naji al-Suwaydi, that of Defence to Naji Shawkat, Justice, Economics, and Foreign Affairs were given to Muḥammad ʿAli Maḥmud, Yunis al-Sabʿawi, and Musā al-Shahbandar, and Education to Dr. Ḥasan al-Salman. The Prime Minister did not fail to announce, in the strict tradition of incoming Premiers, that a new age of all the public virtues and blessings had begun. Of the normality of his own position he admitted no doubt; there had been, at the worst, just one more coup d'état, a purely domestic affair! In the eyes of his supporters, of the Youth Movement, and of part of the urban public, a strong Government free from lingering commitments, hotly patriotic and backed by the Army, had at last been established. In the tribes, apathy and vague uneasiness prevailed. The more critical or conservative townsmen and most older politicians viewed with alarm the implied flouting of the British, the commitment to Germans and Italians, the precipitate flight of the Regent, and the present crude domination by Army leaders always disliked and feared by the civil public. The release of convicts serving sentences for their share in the Monck-Mason murder was significant. Leading statesmen loyal to the

1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH1 Iraq MH1

Regent and to the Treaty, among them Nuri Sa'id and Da'ud Haydari, escaped from Baghdad and joined the Amir and their colleagues in Palestine. The new British Ambassador entered Baghdad on 4 April without official greeting by the 'Iraq Government save that of the Amin al-'Aṣima, Arshad al-'Umari, and remained invisible in his Embassy, careful in no way to countenance the new régime. Between himself and Rashid 'Ali personally there was little cordiality. The Gaylani Ministry assumed its functions in a Baghdad Army-dominated, socially frightened, commercially inert. The industrial frustrations of war-time—the stoppage of hopeful factories, the impossibility of importing machinery, and the shortage of vehicles—added to the adverse factors confronting it.

The Government's reception abroad was unfavourable. Turkey and Sa'udi Arabia saw with regret the adoption in 'Iraq of a policy the reverse of their own. In London, where these developments had been little expected, the immediate decision was to secure Baṣra and as much as possible of 'Iraq's other centres and means of communication. To this end an urgent request was sent by Churchill to India to produce troops and land them at Baṣra. A brigade of the 10th Indian Division, with a regiment of artillery and ancillary troops, who were on the point of embarking for the Far East, were diverted and sailed from Karachi for the Gulf on 12 April, under Major-General W. A. K. Fraser. They arrived at Baṣra on 18 April, anticipated by a few hours by a half-battalion of British infantry flown there by the Royal Air Force, to be moved on a fortnight later by air to Habbaniya.

Cornwallis, warned on 12 April of the dispatch of troops, informed the Government accordingly on the 16th. Rashid Ali' first instructed that all facilities should be given for their landing; but three days later he stipulated that the forces disembarked should move forthwith across 'Iraq to Ruṭba or beyond, that troops in transit should never exceed one brigade-group, and that suitable advance notice of arrivals should henceforward be given. Meanwhile, no more troops were to land until the present forces were clear of 'Iraq territory. These arbitrary and clearly unfriendly restrictions were unknown to the spirit or text of the Anglo-'Iraqi Treaty; and this was pointed out by the British Ambassador, whose first personal meeting with Gaylani took place on 26 April and brought them no nearer together. Extensive flooding around Baṣra must anyhow have made the newly-landed force immobile for a time. The Prime Minister on 27 April repeated in writing his demand that the troops at Baṣra should move on; public opinion, he said, was dangerously deteriorating at the sight of this British garrison. Cornwallis's reply was to give warning on 28 April of the arrival of further supporting or ancillary troops, in approximately

1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH1 Iraq MH1

563 668 on the certainty that indulgence in the north would be followed by equal or greater Shi'i demands, and on the crudely selfish ambitions of the Kurdish leaders. The Kurds were, moreover, represented in the Cabinet only by individuals long denationalized, and in the Chamber by deputies selected for their tractability.

The Pachachi Ministry did little to honour the undertakings of Nuri Pasha, though the Prime Minister and Arshad approved them against the opposition of Muṣṭafā al-'Umari and Taḥsin 'Ali. Baha al-Din was removed from Sulaymaniya; but after a meeting of Kurdish leaders there in July 1944, the Cabinet sent up two Kurdish Mutaṣarrifs to take charge of that liwā and Arbil, and dispatched the Minister of Economics, Tawfiq Wahbi, on a goodwill mission in Kurdistan. He was forced to realize the extent of ill will towards Baghdad, and found that Barzani power had redoubled by a recent marriage alliance with Zibar. On the Minister's departure Mullā Muṣṭafā helped himself to Government grain stores, looted police posts, conducted a futile correspondence with the Mutaṣarrif of Mosul, and demanded from Baghdad the fulfilment of Nuri Pasha's promises—and a loan for himself. In November, four 'Iraqis were dropped in Mosul liwā by parachute from a German plane; two were captured, two escaped. The year closed with uneasiness at the likely prospect of another Kurdish campaign, this time in midwinter: a blow which the Government attempted to forestall by free distributions of grain and cloth.

These fears proved in part groundless. Peace was outwardly undisturbed throughout the winter of 1944–5, though Kurdish restless dissatisfaction and the increase of Russian influence precluded confidence. A connexion between Kurdish nationalism—of the type favoured by the intelligentsia rather than that of the feudal leaders—and some type of Communism became more evident; two Kurdish-language Communist magazines, later combined into one (the *Azadi*, or Freedom), appeared in 'Iraq in 1934 produced, like *al-Qa'ida*, by the Communist Party; and some of the organizers, who included Army officers, were no doubt in touch with the Russians. The forms taken by both nationalism and Communism were various; *Azadi* was purely Communist and advocated a united front with the Arabs against reaction and feudalism, while the Persian or Adharbayjani *Nishtman* spoke for exclusive Kurdish unity and rights, and bade the feudal leaders modernize themselves.

563 669 In March 1945 an Amnesty Bill was placed before Parliament, and passed with the reluctance of many deputies; it pardoned all Kurdish offenders up to February 1944, the date of the Mullā's submission. He himself visited Mosul, and was received there by

1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH1 Iraq MH1

the Minister of the Interior; and Barzan area was transferred from Mosul liwā to Arbil. But the restless ambition of the Barzani was incorrigible. Alleging British support—a fantastic fiction believed by many both in Barzan and in Baghdad—he harried the valleys far beyond his own area, seized Government stores at Margasur, and occupied police posts. Forced to act, the Army advanced in September in three columns towards his fastnesses, while the R.I.A.F. bombed his followers and properties. A police column advanced from 'Amadiya, and the Turks aided by closing their frontier. The Army column from 'Aqra was soon in trouble and its line of retreat threatened. It was rescued, and the position restored, only by the success of the Minister of Interior in raising, for ready money, irregular tribal forces under such of the Barzani's neighbours as welcomed the chance to pay off old scores and be subsidized for doing it. Mullā Muṣṭafā and his army, hard pressed from every side, crossed now 2,000 strong into Persia, there to find ready welcome and support. He could now drink deep of Russian-sponsored Kurdish nationalism in its active centre at Mahabad: could consult with the ambitious Qadhi Muḥammad, leader of the movement, with open Russian support: and could concert plans with him and his Democratic Party for a Kurdish State astride the frontier, a State to be closely associated with the Adharbayjan Republic now similarly forming under the Russians at Tabriz. On 15 December 1945 a Kurdish People's Government was inaugurated at Mahabad by Qadhi Muḥammad in the honoured presence of Mullā Muṣṭafā and Soviet officers. A week later Qadhi Muḥammad was elected President, a Parliament was formed, and the Mullā with other supporting tribal leaders was promoted Field-Marshal and decked in full Russian uniform.

It was natural that Baghdad's request for the disarming and extradition of its rebel subjects should be unheeded. But at least the campaign was over and the enemy, by whatever means, dispersed; the Army could be thanked for its efforts and decorated by the Regent, while the Prime Minister himself toured the north. All efforts were made to re-establish administration and show goodwill by the early erection of schools, dispensaries, and police posts. A court martial was convened at Arbil for the trial of Barzani rebels, and summoned more than a hundred, including Mullā Muṣṭafā and Shaykh Aḥmad, to appear before it. The two brothers and thirty of their followers, including three Army officers, were condemned to death in absence, and seventy more to life imprisonment.

Though a period of peace followed, no part of the Kurdish problem had been solved. With their social structure, ideas of 'Government', and feudal leadership, any early prospect of a real national autonomy must be fanciful, unless total anarchy be

4s Wilson G-3 (no date) 1937 MH Iraq MH
Yazidis MH 10

The Yezidis in 'Iraq practically all dwell either in the Sinjār or Shaikhān districts. Each of these districts has a brass peacock and that belonging to Shaikhān must never cross the Tigris. If it did so the world would come to an end! Non-Yezidis cannot view the peacocks or the other sacred emblems, which include the "shema'dan" or candlestick and the "bairaqs" or banners. When not touring, all emblems are kept at the residence of the *Mir* at Baa'dhra in Shaikhān, though a few years ago the Sinjār Yezidis, who were at variance with the *Mir*, seized their peacock and collected subscriptions on their account until compelled by Government to return it to its lawful keeper. Yezidis object strongly to the use of the word "Shaitān" (Satan) or any word resembling it. Terms meaning "curse" are also never used less Satan construes them as a tactless reminder of his fall.

Owing to these difficulties and restrictions, Yezidis are not "good mixers" and rarely enter Government service. A few were formerly employed by the British Government in the transport company of the 'Iraq Levies, but did not prove very satisfactory. Occasionally they have enlisted in the 'Iraq army, but an attempt to apply a light measure of conscription to the Sinjār Yezidis resulted in an armed revolt by five villages. This necessitated punitive action with, unfortunately, heavy casualties on both sides. The Yezidis speak a form of Kurdish, but many also know Arabic. Ain Sifni or Ain-i-Safina (Spring of the Boat) is the chief market town of the Shaikhān Yezidis. It derives its name from a tradition that the Ark touched ground there.

Yezidis are to be found outside 'Iraq in the Caucasus and also a few thousand north of Aleppo.

It is difficult to believe that this curious religion can long survive in 'Iraq under present-day conditions. The *Mir* is unpopular and there is no better successor amongst his in-bred and degenerate relatives. The Yezidis have recently refused to yield him many of his former rights and have severely criticised his squandering of the religious revenues. Most of the members of the hierarchy have concentrated their energies on trying to divert funds to their own pockets and have quarrelled furiously. A certain number of stalwarts have defied the priests and attended schools. In the Sinjār prior to the Great War religious pressure induced a considerable number of Yezidis to adopt Islam, and it is within the bounds of possibility that ere long there may be a regular landslide to either the Christian or Islamic faith or both.

6:Ireland S-5 (no date)1937 MHI Iraq MHI

upon Arabs to rise and die for their fatherland. For the most part, *Al-'Ahd* seemed to be composed of young men: doctors, lawyers, schoolmasters (a number of whom had been dismissed in the winter of 1919 for too violently proclaiming their anti-British sentiments) and the like. Nevertheless, while the members may have been unimportant individually, collectively they were important. The moderates, as is usually the case, held their peace and remained passive. *Al-'Ahd*, on the other hand, being well organized and having definite aims, gained the ear of the populace.[1]

It became evident that the society in Mōsul was in contact with members of the parent society in Dair az-Zūr and beyond, and that the Mōsulīs were prepared to rise should any opportunity be given them by the Sharifian forces. In late March, 1920, the first definite reports that the Arab Government intended to attack Mōsul were received and throughout April and May the tension increased. Outside Mōsul, the Shammar Jarba under 'Ajīl al-Yawar, Michal al-Fāris Bunaiyan, Hamaidī and others, the Khābūr Jūbūr under Muslat, the 'Albū Nimr, the 'Aqaidāt and other tribes[2] were rendering life and property unsafe. From April onwards, the concentration of tribal raids on military supply-camps and on military convoys between the Shargat rail-head and Mōsul pointed to other purposes than mere desire for loot, and to a higher control than that of tribal shaikhs. The methods employed seemed to indicate that the former officers of Faisal's Arab Army had not forgotten the tactics used by Colonel Lawrence and his fellow officers against the Turkish lines of supply in the Hijāz and in Syria. Instead of

[1] The Society was admitted by the authorities to be extremely well organized (Ibid., p. 5). Not until late May was the Government able to identify definitely even a few of the leading members. Of the other two patriotic societies, the *Haras* (the continuation of the pre-war secret society) and the *Hillal*, nothing was known to the authorities except the names.

[2] For locale and strength of these tribes: *Note on Nomad Tribes*, by Major J. I. Eadie; *Note on Tribes and Shaikhs of 'Anah-Albu Kamal District*; *Arab Tribes of the Baghdad Wilayet*; *Note on Tribes for General Staff*; and *Handbook of Mesopotamia*, pp. 110 ff.

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Turkish garrisons being reduced by means of British arms and funds, it was now British forces, isolated at Mōsul, which were being rendered ineffective by means of Turkish arms and by forces stimulated by both Turkish and British funds.[1]

On May 30th, the British authorities at Mōsul sent to Baghdad a warning based on the information that an Arab Army under Jamīl Beg Midfai, styling himself 'Commander of the Northern 'Iraq Army', had gathered at Tall Fajāmī on the Khābūr, with Mōsul as its objective. The warning was disregarded by the military authorities at Baghdad.[2] Except for reconnaissances by aeroplanes and armoured cars which failed to locate the approaching Arabs, no other efforts to oppose them were made by the Mōsul military authorities until too late.[3] The only chance of checking the Arab forces lay in the hope that the Gendarmes at Tall 'Afar, considered as one of the most promising companies, could interpose themselves between the approaching army. Treachery had been at work, however. During the night of June 3rd, Captain Stuart, Commander of the Gendarmes, was murdered by Muhammad 'Alī Effendi, one of the Gendarme officers. It was then too much to hope that the men would rally to the support of the British. Early on the morning of June 4th, tribesmen rode into the town, followed by the Arab Army under Jamīl Beg Midfai and by a large force of the Jūbūr under Muslat, and of the Shammar under 'Ajīl, Bunaiyan and Hachīm. The three British other ranks, after defending themselves for several hours from the roof of their billet, were killed by bombs. Two armoured cars sent out from Mōsul were ambushed, overturned and their crews, numbering fourteen, were killed. A reconnoitring aeroplane was shot down and narrowly avoided capture. In the meantime, Captain Barlow, who had been out on reconnaissance

[1] It seems certain that arms as well as funds came to the Sharifian officers at Dair az-Zūr from Turkish sources, and that the British subsidy to the Damascus Government also kept them in funds. *Review C. Admin.*, 1914-1920, pp. 138-9.
[2] Wilson, op. cit., p. 273.
[3] *Admin. Report, Mosul*, 1920, p. 1.

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had been captured by tribesmen and afterwards killed while trying to make his escape.[1]

From Tall 'Afar, raiding parties from the tribes attacked the Mōsul-Shargāt road and did considerable damage to the military convoys. Letters were sent to all the surrounding country, urging it to revolt and attack Mōsul, where a rising was expected. When, however, the outposts of the Arab army came in contact with the British column, sent out from Mōsul on June 5th, Jamīl Beg and his officers fled to Dair az-Zūr.

It was evident to British observers that the Movement had derived its strength from the general belief that either Sharīf 'Abdullāh or Sharīf Zaid were behind it in person. 'There is no reasonable doubt',[2] the Political Officer for Mōsul wrote later, 'that the expedition was organized by the *'Ahd* organization in Syria, that it was armed from the Sharifian arsenal in Dair az-Zur, that Faisal deprecated it but was aware of it, and that it was actively encouraged and financed by Zaid'.[3]

The failure of the Arab Army to make a stand, the non-appearance of the expected Sharīf and the prompt action of the British troops convinced the countryside as well as most of the inhabitants of Mōsul that they had best stand by the existing order. Nevertheless, the *'Ahd* was too well organized to give up hope. On June 6th, the first notice bearing its five-pointed seal was published, predicting the immediate expulsion of the British. The notices continued until June 17th, when the last one appeared, repudiating the decision of the San Remo Conference and reiterating the kingship of 'Abdullāh. Rumours filled the air of a gathering of fresh forces for an attack on Mōsul. The fall of Damascus and the occupation of Syria by the French in late July ended the trans-Euphrates period of Nationalism. Its inspiration during the next few months came from Baghdad.

During July, letters were received from Baghdad, telling of the notable work achieved by the *Mandubīn*, and calling on the

[1] *Admin. Report, Mosul*, 1920, pp. 1-2. [2] Ibid., p. 2.

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CHAPTER XIV

THE INSURRECTION OF 1920

175* 669 At Rumaitha on the lower Euphrates, always a centre of unrest, the incident occurred which precipitated the Insurrection. On June 30th, the Dhawalim section of the Bani Hūchaim broke into the Government *Sarai* to release their Shaikh who had been detained by the Assistant Political Officer, as the result of a dispute over an agricultural loan.[1] The local disturbance became the occasion of the general rising. The entire tribe, under orders from Najaf and Kūfa, besieged the Political staff and garrison from July 4th; cut the railroad above and below Rumaitha, while other tribes attacked the Government offices at Samāwa and besieged the two companies stationed there. The railroad was again cut above and below Samāwa.[2] The situation was not irreparable, however, and had prompt and effectively directed action been taken with sufficient troops, the rising might have been quickly suppressed, although the tribes appeared to be under the direction of 'Iraqī ex-officers from Baghdad and Syria. At Rumaitha and Samāwa, the British had definitely entered upon a trial of strength with the tribes. The tribal leaders were well aware of the essential objectives before the British: relief of the garrisons and the reinstatement of the Government. The immediate achievement of these two objectives was to be the determining factor either for peace or for insurrection in the rest of the country.

[1] *London Gazette*, July 5th, 1921, p. 5330, Dispatch No. 3 (with Appendixes) from Lieut.-Gen. Sir J. A. L. Haldane, November 8th, 1920 (hereafter *London Gazette*). Also Report, Lieut. P. T. Hyatt, A.P.O., Rumaitha, August 10th, 1920; Note on Outbreak of Disturbances at Rumaitha, C. Daly, P.O., Diwānlya, August 26th, 1920.

[2] Telegram No. 8233, Civil Commissioner to India Office, July 8th, 1920.

6:Ireland S-5 (no date)1937 MHl Iraq MHl

INSURRECTION OF 1920

Although the general situation had long been known to be threatening, only 4200 British troops and 30,000 Indian troops were available for active service out of the total force estimated at 133,000.[1] Nor were the necessary steps following the outbreak taken with the requisite speed and decision. Sir Aylmer Haldane, Commander-in-Chief, had returned on June 24th, to the Persian Hill station where the bulk of his Headquarters Staff was already in residence. Moreover, Military Headquarters tended to place little faith in the reports of the Political Officers regarding the seriousness of the situation.[2] The resultant lack of co-operation on this initial occasion, as on later occasions, was not without disastrous consequences.

Two attempts to relieve Rumaitha were unsuccessful[3] and led to further encouragement of the tribes. Not until July 20th was a relief column, after severe fighting, able to reach the town which was evacuated the next day.[4] Samāwa was not relieved until October 14th. In the meantime, the Miskhab tribes below Najaf marched on Abu Sūkhair, on July 19th. The following day, the southern Banī Hasan tribe arose. On July 20th, Kūfa was besieged and was not relieved until October 17th. On the same day the Banī Hasan attacked Kifl, to relieve which, a force including three companies of the 3rd Manchesters was dispatched in intense heat and without adequate arrangements for water. The force met with overwhelming disaster, less than half the original number returning to Hilla. The incident was magnified by rumour. Practically the whole of the middle Euphrates rose. Rumaitha, Hindīya Barrage and Musaiyib had already been evacuated; Samāwa and Kūfa

[1] *London Gazette*, p. 5330 (9); Appendix No. 1; Haldane, Sir J. A. L., *The Insurrection in Mesopotamia*, 1920, p. 325. Sir Aylmer estimated that of these troops only 500 British and 2500 to 3000 Indian troops were available as a mobile force; ibid., p. 72.

[2] For the Commander-in-Chief's attitude to Political Staff, Haldane, op. cit., p. 92; also Wilson, op. cit., pp. 275-6.

[3] The additional troops sent July 1st, 2nd and 3rd were insufficient to beat off the insurgents, and the relief expedition, sent July 7th, was forced to return after severe fighting: *London Gazette*, p. 5331.

[4] Ibid., p. 5332 (28).

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were besieged and other points had been either cut off or endangered. Withdrawal from Dīwānīya to Hilla, which had been repeatedly attacked, was deemed essential. It was effected under great difficulties, July 30th.[1] For a time, no order could be maintained outside the line of defences immediately about Baghdad.[2]

The British reverses on the middle Euphrates not unnaturally reacted on the situation on the lower Euphrates and in the Muntafiq. On July 30th, Saiyid Hādī al-Mūqutar from Najaf appeared in the Samāwa area, establishing himself at Khidhr. Supported, it was alleged, by 'an immense quantity of gold',[3] he became the leading figure among the insurgents, inflaming the tribes to a *Jihād* with but one aim: the overthrow of the Civil Administration in the lower Euphrates. Other Saiyids and *'Ulamā*, operating on the Gharrāf, at Shatra and at Khidhr, joined him in preaching the *Jihād* which was declared from Karbalā about August 6th.[4] These activities were doubly effective on the tribes in conjunction with what appeared to be continued British reverses. Musaiyib had been reoccupied on August 12th, and Hindīya Barrage on August 13th, but the evacuation of Qal'at Sikar on August 12th, following an attack on it, led the insurgents to believe that they had inflicted a military defeat on the Government and had driven it from a large portion of the country. The insurgents' belief in the success of the rising seemed confirmed by the British loss of Khidhr with two armoured trains on August 13th; by the isolation by land of Samāwa on the same day; by the loss of several British vessels on the upper Euphrates on August 15th; by the evacuation of Shatra on August 20th;[5] by the capture of the *S.9* with all on board, on August 28th; by the evacuation of

[1] *London Gazette*, p. 5335 (50-8).
[2] *Review C. Admin.*, 1914-1920, p. 147.
[3] *Admin. Report, Muntafiq*, 1920, pp. 20, 21.
[4] *London Gazette*, p. 5337 (66).
[5] Not August 27th as in Haldane: op. cit., p. 215. See *Admin. Report, Muntafiq*, 1920, pp. 20, 21.

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Sūq ash-Shuyūkh, on September 1st; and by the annihilation of a British force as it attempted to evacuate Samāwa railway camp, on September 3rd. In Nāsiriya alone, no rising took place, although it often appeared to be dangerously near. The appearance in the Muntafiq of the relief column for Samāwa at the end of September lessened the anxiety, but not until after the relief of Samāwa, October 14th,[1] and the submission of the Rumaitha tribes, did the rising collapse in the Muntafiq.

In the meantime, northward and westward of Baghdad fresh risings had broken out. In Ba'qūbā Division, the Mahrut Revenue Office was raided by a section of the Kharkīya tribe, on August 8th. On the following day, the same tribesmen attacked Abū Hawā Station. Dīltāwa fell to the insurgents, August 12th. It had early come under the influence of Saiyid Muhammad as-Sadr who, after the attempt to arrest him at Baghdad, August 12th, made it his headquarters[2] from which he encouraged the insurgents, especially at Sāmarrā.[3] Ba'qūbā, which had always been anti-British, was evacuated by the British on the same day. Shahrābān, where a small but influential group of Nationalists had been in touch with the Baghdad leaders, was captured, August 13th,[4] by the tribes, who killed Captain W. T. Wrigley, Captain J. T. Bradfield, Captain E. L. Buchanan,[5] and two British Warrant Officers. A provisional Arab Government was then set up.[6]

Qizil Ribat and Khānaqīn, where the revolt was largely the work of the Dilo Kurds, without any trace of the national

[1] *London Gazette*, p. 5342 (114).
[2] *Admin. Report, Diyalah Division*, 1920 (Baghdad, 1922), p. 8; Haldane, op. cit., p. 233.
[3] *Admin. Report, Samarra Division*, 1920 (Baghdad, 1921), pp. 1, 3.
[4] See *Admin. Report, Diyalah*, 1920, pp. 2, 7. Haldane, op. cit., p. 164, gives date as August 15th.
[5] Mrs. Buchanan, who had been slightly wounded, was rescued and protected until the relief column reached Shahrābān. See Buchanan, Z., *In the Hands of the Arabs* (1921).
[6] For composition of this provisional government: *Admin. Report, Diyalah*, 1920, p. 6.

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175* 669 aspirations such as played a part in other districts, fell on August 14th. In Mandalī, where the Naqīb, Saiyid 'Ilyas Agha, had enlarged on the Nationalist views held by Saiyid Talib Pasha with whom he was in close touch, a provisional government was also formed. It took over in an orderly manner from the Deputy Assistant Political Officer. Although not efficient, it succeeded in maintaining law and order until late October when it lost its authority. From Ba'qūbā the insurrection spread to Kirkūk Division, but only in Kifrī did open outbreaks occur. The tribes entered the town on August 26th, killing the Political Officer, Captain G. H. Salmon.

On August 27th, Ba'qūbā was reoccupied by British Forces. The next day, a force from Kirkūk entered Kifrī. On September 6th, a relief column reached Qizil Ribat,[1] another column occupying Shahrābān two days later.[2] Dīltāwa was reached September 24th. Not until November 20th, when a cavalry column occupied Mandalī, did that area come under control again.

Among the tribes west and north-west of Baghdad, Colonel G. E. Leachman, by his vigorous methods and with the aid of liberal subsidies[3] and the valuable assistance of Major J. I. Eadie, Assistant Political Officer at 'Āna,[4] of Shaikh 'Alī as-Sulaimān of the Dulaim and of Shaikh Fahād Beg of the 'Anaiza,[5] who remained loyal throughout, was able to preserve

[1] During the Insurrection, the British Consul at Kermanshah arranged for the Sinjabī tribe in Persia to make extensive raids on the Dilo tribes in 'Iraq, who had been mainly responsible for the risings at Qizil Ribat and Khānaqīn. After the raids the tribe returned to Persia, *Admin. Report, Diyalah*, 1920, p. 5.

[2] *London Gazette*, p. 5338 (78).

[3] Subsidies to shaikhs and Secret Service allowances in the Dulaim Division, of which Colonel Leachman was Political Officer, increased from Rs. 50,000 or £3,750 in 1919 (*Budget Estimates*, 1919-1920, p. 10) to Rs. 279,000 or £21,000 in 1920 (*Budget Estimates*, 1920-1921, p. 21). Cf. Main, E., op. cit., p. 75, for claim that Leachman 'had *single-handed* and without a penny to spend on bribes held the Upper Euphrates tribes in this time of full rebellion, all the troops having been withdrawn.'

[4] For tribute to Major Eadie's work on the Upper Euphrates during the Insurrection see Haldane, op. cit., pp. 106, 171.

[5] For value of these shaikhs' loyalty and support see *Review C. Admin.*, 1914-1920, p. 147.

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peace until his murder, on August 12th, by Shaikh Dharī of the Zoba' tribe. His death was the signal for risings from Fallūja to 'Āna, the British forces being forced back from Hīt to Ramādī which, with Fallūja, were cut off from Baghdad. Relief reached Fallūja on September 24th and Ramādī two days later.[1] Hīt was not reoccupied until October 4th.

Around Sāmarrā, the fourth of the Holy Cities, the preaching of Saiyid Muhammad as-Sadr, supported by an influential shaikh, the events in Ba'qūbā Division and the natural unrest among the tribes brought about a rising.[2] The town was unsuccessfully attacked on August 28th, Saiyid Muhammad as-Sadr, it was reported, directing the insurgents himself.[3] Other points were also attacked, but by the middle of September order had been generally restored.

In the 'Arbīl area, the courage and strenuous efforts of the British officers, whose lives were in constant danger, saved the situation although several outlying posts had to be abandoned. Mōsul, as already indicated, and Sulaimānīya did not rise although much uneasiness existed.

In the south, the Tigris valley remained quiet.[4] Not a shot was fired either in 'Amāra or in Basra where the Nationalist agitation, conducted chiefly by Yūsuf Kamāl and his father-in-law, Saiyid 'Umarī of the Khudair Mosque, collapsed with the former's deportation.[5]

In Baghdad itself, practically no disturbance occurred[6] although an outbreak had been expected on August 12th. The comparative quietness of the city was partly due to the

[1] *London Gazette*, p. 5339 (86).
[2] *Admin. Report, Samarra*, 1920, pp. 1, 3.
[3] Ibid., p. 3.
[4] Amīr ar-Rabī'a, when pressed for arrears in taxes in 1922, maintained that, in response to British promises in 1920 of remission of his taxes, he alone had prevented the Insurrection from spreading to the Tigris valley.
[5] *Admin. Report, Basra Division*, 1920 (Baghdad, 1921), p. 1.
[6] The most serious disturbance occurred on August 3rd when the Mechanical Transport Depot was fired by young Nationalists who had mixed among the Arab labourers. The complete loss of petrol and other supplies threatened to paralyse transport. Other incendiary attempts on dumps and stores were thwarted. *London Gazette*, p. 5335 (49).

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175* 669 continual presence of troops, partly to precautionary measures which, directly or indirectly, removed most of the Nationalist leaders from the capital,[1] and partly to restraining influences in the city. Moderate Nationalists, such as Saiyid Talib Pasha, who had been allowed to return to 'Iraq in February, 1920,[2] Saiyid 'Abdur Rahmān al-Gailānī and many others, held aloof from the Insurrection, seeing in it a poor foundation for the new State. Others who had urged forward the Movement both in town and tribe drew back in fear and dismay at the destruction and at the unleashed forces which, if they reached Baghdad, would respect neither friend nor enemy.

By the end of September, it was apparent that Government forces were in the ascendancy although the rising had not yet collapsed. British troops, reinforced from India,[3] had assumed the offensive everywhere, the knowledge of which cooled the ardour of many tribesmen whose expectation of dire punishment to be inflicted urged them to make speedy submission. The news of Sir Percy Cox's return, October 1st, brought a reaction among many of the Nationalists. In many areas, however, as about Samāwa, Rumaitha and Mandalī, the insurgents held on until punitive columns reached them. The end might have come much sooner had it not been for the intransigent anti-British divines at Najaf, who demanded that negotiations should be conducted only through them.

Indicative of their ambitions, two documents, one from the Middle Euphrates and one from the Gharraf, were forwarded to the Political Officer both couched in identically

[1] The attempt to arrest Yūsaf as-Sūwaidī, Saiyid Muhammad as-Sadr, Ja'far abū Timman, 'Alī Bazirqan and Shaikh Ahmad Shaikh Dā'ūd, on August 12th, resulted in the apprehending of the last named only. Several Arabs were killed when the police fired into Nationalists obstructing the arrest of their leaders: Telegram No. 9752, Civil Commissioner to S/S for India, August 13th, 1920.

[2] *The Mandubīn* believed that he had been brought back to create a moderate Nationalist party dependent on Great Britain. He certainly gave great assistance to the Civil Administration for which it was, at the time, grateful: Letter, Political Officer, Basra, to Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, June 26th, 1920.

[3] A total of 4883 British and 24,508 Indian reinforcements besides an Air Force squadron and Medical units were brought to 'Iraq. *London Gazette*, App. 4, p. 5346.

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the same phrasing and language; they were a demand for the institution of a theocratic Government built up on one of the fundamental principles of the Shi'a doctrine. Signed by many prominent shaikhs and leaders, these letters were evidence of the power and hold of the Shi'a divines on the religious emotions of the uneducated tribes.[1]

The effect of the Insurrection has been variously judged. To the British Government, it was a revolt against authority, costing 426 British lives, 1[illegible]8 wounded and 615 missing and prisoners,[2] as well as 8450 casualties among the insurgents.[3] It involved the expenditure of millions of pounds sterling from the British Treasury. It inflicted incalculable damage in the country itself. To the war-weary British public and to the Press, it was the occasion for the revival of the cry 'Evacuate Mesopotamia'. To the British officers and men in 'Iraq, it was a tragedy, wasting lives, spreading destruction and anarchy and sweeping away much of what they had achieved. It was a tragedy, however, in which, often isolated with violent death never far distant and frequently facing almost insuperable difficulties, they played their parts nobly and in accordance with the best traditions of their race for courage and devotion to duty and for heroic exertions in the cause to which they had given themselves. None excelled the Acting Civil Commissioner once the rising had begun, in Herculean labour and in meeting the exigencies of the situation or in devising means to bring the issue to a successful end. His unfaltering trust in and support of the men on whom responsibility devolved, his messages of encouragement and his apparently inexhaustible strength made him a leader to whom officers and men could look with assurance. The actions of these men as a whole and the individual performances of Colonel Leachman, Captain Bertram Thomas, Captain Salmon, Major Ditchburn, Captain

[1] *Admin. Report, Muntafiq*, 1920, p. 19.
[2] *London Gazette*, App. 4, p. 5346.
[3] Ibid., App. 5, p. 5347.

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175 669 Crawford, Captain J. S. Mann, Captain W. R. Hay and a host of others in the summer of 1920 added another chapter, no less splendid, no less inspiring than those which precede it and those which will follow it, in the history of British manhood serving in difficult times and against desperate odds.

To 'Iraqīs, the Insurrection, although suppressed, has been a National War of Independence, directly responsible for forcing the British Government to set up an Arab Government and, eventually, to grant independence: an opinion shared by many writers.[1] Popular opinion has regarded as national heroes those who led the Insurrection or who took a conspicuous part in it; as martyrs, the 'Iraqīs who lost their lives.[2] Political preferment has been given to those who, by their actions both before and during the Insurrection, had proven their attachment to the Nationalist cause.

No evidence is available to show that, because of the Insurrection, a wider measure of immediate Arab participation in the Government was given by the High Commissioner after his

[1] Cf. Toynbee, A. J., *Islamic World*, p. 530; Coke, R., *The Arab's Place in the Sun*, p. 193; Wright, Q., *A.P.S.R.*, November, 1926, p. 746.

[2] See *Al-Istiqlāl*, March 9th, 17th, 1922: *Al-Rāfidān* and *Al-Mufīd*, August 25th, 1922. The following lines appeared in *Al-Istiqlāl*, February 2nd, 1928, when Shaikh Dharī was convicted of the murder of Lieut.-Col. Leachman, August 12th, 1920:

You shall be brought to book some day, you who waylaid Dharī!
Oh ye! Set free the slayer of Leachman!
He has shaken London with all her might.
We are humiliated after you, Oh Dharī!
The culprit's abode shall be swept away.
Victorious is Dharī's standard!
You have taken advantage of an opportune moment, Oh London;
Time is treacherous, Oh Cousin!
Why this long absence, ye moon of the world!
We have grown weary in the slaying of so many British soldiers.
Oh ye! Bow down in homage to the slayer of Leachman.
Honour and Glory are thine, ye slayer of Leachman.
Lie in peace, ye slayer of Leachman!
Oh Shaikh, enjoy thy sleep.
Throughout the land, ye have no like.
Others before you have done it, Oh Cousin.
Ye are equal to a state with all her might.
Sing out hallelujah to the slayer of Leachman!

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arrival. There is evidence, rather, that because of the chaos and unsettled condition of the country, he was unable to give as extensive powers to the Arab Government as he had hoped in June, 1920, when the announcement had been made of the provisional Government, the outlines of which had been foreshadowed in March, 1920,[1] formulated by the Interdepartmental Committee on June 1st, and sanctioned by the Cabinet in the middle of June. At the most, the Insurrection, by indicating the strength of Nationalist sentiment in 'Iraq and by arousing opposition in Great Britain to the retention of the Mandate, due to the fear of further heavy and unremunerative expenditure, stimulated the adoption of the policy of implementing the Mandate by means of a treaty and of bringing 'Iraq into the League of Nations more quickly than H.M. Government had originally contemplated when assuming the Mandate. It must be remembered, however, that the project of a treaty with an Arab Government in 'Iraq originated before the outbreak of the Insurrection. It was made as an official suggestion by Mr. Montagu, on May 17th, 1920, and it is even possible that it was proposed some weeks earlier by an official in the Foreign Office.[2]

While the immediate policy of H.M. Government was not changed and its future policy was altered more in method of procedure than in spirit as a result of the Insurrection, nevertheless the rising did exercise considerable influence on the people of 'Iraq themselves. The Insurrection can scarcely be called national in the strict sense of the word, yet it did indicate a certain national consciousness which in the next few years was to become more clearly defined. The consolidation of the divergent elements in the rising, although merging only temporarily and from different motives, indicated to the 'Iraqis the power of concerted action against which even the forces of the British Government were not invulnerable. The Insurrection revealed, at the same time, the weaknesses and

[1] *Supra*, pp. 199-200, 212, 220-221. [2] Young, op. cit., p. 313.

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175 669 inherent divisions in the people themselves, which their leaders were later to make efforts to eliminate, not always with success or without friction. In addition, it brought forward leaders who were to assume increasingly important roles in the movement towards national independence either in co-operation with the British Government and its policy of gradual emancipation or in opposition as part of the Nationalist group which demanded immediate and complete independence.

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CHAPTER XV

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PROVISIONAL ARAB GOVERNMENT

No conditions could have seemed more unfavourable for the establishment of a new government than those prevailing when Sir Percy Cox, under a salute of seventeen guns, sailed up the Shatt al-'Arab to Basra, October 1st, as His Britannic Majesty's High Commissioner, with full authority to proceed along the lines indicated by H.M. Government in the proclamation dated June 17th, 1920.[1]

A good half of the country was still in active rebellion. The insurgents held Karbalā, Najaf, Tuwairij, Rumaitha, Hīt and a great portion of the Euphrates valley, including the middle sections of the railroad. In the Muntafiq, only one point, Nāsirīya, remained in the hands of the Civil Administration, Samāwa and Kūfa were still besieged. On the Diyālā, the most savage aspects of the Insurrection had passed, but authority had still to be established by the shaikhs and by the British. The provisional Government at Mandalī had not yet collapsed. In the 'Erbil area, British authority had practically vanished, In Mōsul, apprehension still persisted in the face of Kamalist propaganda. Raids and attacks on the Shargāt-Mōsul road continued, culminating in the raid by the Albū Hamad on October 24th, when the well-known Nationalist, Sharīf al-Farūqī, was killed, together with several others. Revenue payments had ceased in many parts of the country. Government offices and legal archives had been looted.[2] Buildings, bridges, railway lines and property[3] had been destroyed.

[1] Issued June 20th, 1920. Text: *supra*, pp. 220-1.

[2] At Ba'qūbā, Dīltāwa, Hilla, Karbalā: *Admin. Report, Justice*, 1920, pp. 3-4.

[3] Damage to the railways, together with loss of commercial revenue during the Insurrection, has been estimated at Rs. 55,000,000 or £412,500: *Admin. Report*, 1920-1922, p. 24.

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Private feuds had sprung up in their former vigour. Confidence in British methods built up by many months of hard and patient work, had been swept away. Habits of obedience to authority had been lost in the welter of anti-Government violence. Complete control was not to be thoroughly re-established until the spring of 1921.

Sir Percy Cox saw clearly that a complete consultation of the wishes of the inhabitants by means of a representative Assembly as to the nature of the permanent Government was impossible for a time, at least three or four months being required to set up the machinery and to obtain a decision.[1] He deemed it essential, however, to initiate immediately some form of National government regardless of the unfavourable conditions and his own private misgivings.[2] Undue delay would mean disappointment and bitterness, arising from frustration of the hopes of a speedy amelioration of conditions which had been aroused in all classes. Confidence in the British Government and its good faith had to be established among the Nationalists and revived among Great Britain's friends. Pacification had to be furthered by removing, as far as possible, the causes which had given rise to the Insurrection. Not least, a start had to be made towards the reduction of British expenditure, so urgently demanded by H.M. Government at the behest of the British people.

Consultations with the notables of Basra, of Nāsirīya, which was visited by air on October 3rd, of Qurna, of Qal'at Sālih and of 'Amāra, undertaken with the view of restoring confidence and of acquainting himself with current opinion, aided the High Commissioner in formulating even before reaching Baghdad on October 11th, the procedure by which he hoped to give effect to H.M.Government's policy of instituting a National Government.[3]

[1] *Note on Political Developments in Mesopotamia subsequent to October 1, 1920* (League of Nations Publication No. C. 465, M. 341, 1921), p. 3 (hereafter *Political Developments in Meso.*).

[2] For his account of these misgivings see his 'Historical Summary' in Bell, *Letters*, Vol. II, p. 527.

[3] Ibid., p. 562. Sir Percy Cox's own statement (ibid., p. 527) that he arrived in Baghdad on October 5th, is obviously a misprint.

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643 requested to remain in office at the death of King Faisal, was speedily convinced by conversations with King Ghāzī that he did not enjoy His Majesty's confidence.[1] His resignation, tendered October 28th, was immediately accepted to the great surprise of political circles. It was apparent that the young monarch desired not only a Cabinet amenable to his wishes but also a Parliament of his own creation. He was persuaded, however, by his British and 'Iraqī advisers against this course. Parliament was not dissolved and the new ministry, although headed by Jamīl Beg Midfai, was less Nationalist in tinge than he had desired.

On the whole, during the reign of King Ghāzī the personal power and influence of the Crown has tended to be less than under the former regime. His Majesty's youth, his inexperience and lack of training in statecraft have made it natural that he should be forced to give more scope than his father to the men about him, in his Palace and in the Cabinet, and to rely upon their advice and that of His Britannic Majesty's representatives
[645] at his Court. Thus few if any of the seven ministerial crises of the reign seem directly traceable to His Majesty's influence but have been due rather to discord within the Cabinets, as when Jamīl Beg Midfai resigned, February 13th, 1934, to lack of confidence to meet emergencies, as at the time of the tribal revolts in March, 1935,[2] or to military intervention as in the *coup d'état* of October 29th, 1936.

• 669 On this last occasion, General Baqir Sidqī,[3] in charge of army manœuvres to the north-east of Baghdad, suddenly moved the troops with the Air Force on the capital. In manifestoes dropped from the air, he demanded in the name of the army the dismissal of the Yāsīn Pasha ministry, with which 'the army had lost patience' and the appointment of one 'composed of

[1] See translation of Rashīd 'Alī's letter of resignation, *The Times*, October 30th, 1933.

[2] *The Times*, March 17th, 1935.

[3] Baqir Sidqī led the 'Iraqī forces against the Assyrians in 1933, when he won great popularity and promotion. His campaigns in 1935 against the tribes added to his reputation for military ability and ruthlessness.

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sincere citizens' under Hikmat Sulaimān.[1] Warning was given that the army might have to take action against those who did not conform to the manifestoes.[2] After the bombardment of Baghdad by the 'Iraqī Air Force and an attempt to negotiate during which Ja'far Pasha al-'Askarī, Minister of Defence, was treacherously murdered, Yāsīn Pasha resigned. Hikmat Sulaimān took office with friends and nominees of Baqir Sidqī, few of them outstanding personalities.[3]

The various reasons put forward by the new government for the *coup d'état*, which seems to have come without warning to British and 'Iraqīs alike, are not altogether convincing.[4] It is true that Yāsīn Pasha had suppressed newspapers, had heavily bribed the tribal leaders to keep the peace, had curbed opposition, had appointed friends to office and that his personal attitude as Prime Minister had offended many 'Iraqīs. It is also true that a general feeling existed that 'Iraq had made little progress under his Government. These unsatisfactory conditions could have been ameliorated, however, by constitutional means. As justifications for military intervention they assume the appearance of pretexts rather than explanations. Facts not mentioned in the official statements, as that army appropriations had been reduced, that the organization of the army was not proceeding according to the ideas of General Sidqī and that many aspiring politicians were out of office, seem to come closer to the causes behind the *coup d'état*[5] and would make it appear

[1] Formerly Minister of Interior in 1933 at the time of the campaign against the Assyrians. Educated in Turkey, he possesses great admiration for Turkey. His brother, Māhmud Shefket Pasha, was Grand Vizier of Turkey in 1913.

[2] *The Times*, October 31st, 1936. Also *Al-Ahrām* (Cairo), same date.

[3] *Waqayi al-'Iraqiya* (Government Gazette), No. 1542, October 29th, 1936. In addition to Hikmat Sulaimān as Prime Minister and Minister of Interior were: Nājī al-'Asīl, Foreign Affairs; Ja'far abū Timman, Finance; Kāmil al Chāderchi, Economics; Abdul Latīf Nūrī, Defence; Sālih Jābbur, Justice; Yūsuf 'Izz-ad-Dīn Ibrāhim, Education.

[4] *The Times*, October 31st, November 2nd, 5th and 7th, 1936; *Al-Balāgh* (Cairo), November 2nd, 6th, 1936; *Al-Ahrām*, November 1st, 1936.

[5] The *coup d'état* has also been ascribed to the influence of Germany and Italy, of extreme 'Iraqi Nationalists, of Shī'īs, of the Jews, and of Socialists by the *Daily Herald*, *Al-Balāgh*, *Palestine Post*, *Al-Liwā*, *Alif-Bā* (Damascus), and the *Daily Mail*, respectively, November 1st to 6th, 1936.

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667 that personal ambition of the leaders had no small part in the events of October 29th and afterwards.

At one time it was suspected that King Ghāzī might have been cognizant of the plot, his impatience at the limitations placed on his power being well-known.[1] His assurances to the contrary appeared to be sincere, particularly in the light of subsequent events. Indeed, Baqir Sidqī and Hikmat Sulaimān, supported by the armed forces, may be regarded as possessing sole power in 'Iraq to-day despite published statements that General Sidqī would concern himself solely with the re-organization of the army, that the Government would work with a freely elected Parliament and that the rights of all section of the people would be respected.

Council of Ministers

645 Among the principal factors which have adversely affected the position and the functioning of the Council of State may be listed its susceptibility to outside influence, its instability, not altogether unrelated as has already been indicated, and the lack of a sufficiently large class of 'Iraqis of Cabinet rank.

In the period from August, 1921, to October, 1932, the average life of the fourteen Cabinets was less than ten months each. Four Ministries, the second of the Naqīb, that of Taufīq Beg, the fourth of 'Abdul Muhsin Beg and that of Nājī Pasha, lasted less than four months each. Nūrī Pasha's first Cabinet, by remaining in office from March 23rd, 1930,[2] to October 19th 1931, had the longest existence although its tenure was not undisturbed by internal dissensions. Such instability, due largely to the King's influence, to the conflict of British and

[1] *Al-Ayyām* (Damascus), November 3rd, 1936, cites Baqir Sidqī, however, as saying: 'In no way have I proceeded in any action against the will of H.M. the King and of the Supreme Power.'

[2] *Waqayi' al-'Iraqiya* (Government Gazette), No. 844, March 27th, 1930.

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'Iraqī viewpoints[1] and, in two cases, to alleged lack of confidence by Parliament[2] had unfortunate consequences. On the one hand, the smooth course of administration was interrupted by the change of administrative officials which usually accompanied the change of Ministry, and by the dislike of subordinate officials of assuming responsibility and initiative, never more evident than in the absence of a Minister. The fact that the dislocation was not greater may be attributed to the presence of British Advisers in the Ministries and in the key positions. On the other hand, public regard for the Council of Ministers was undoubtedly weakened and opportunities for a strong man to achieve dictatorial power were increased.

The twenty-one Cabinets between 1921 and October, 1936, have been repeatedly formed from a group of some two score men. The inability, or reluctance as 'Iraqī critics of the Council maintain, to find a wider selection of men of Cabinet standard has been accentuated by the necessity of incorporating within the Council representatives of the Shī'a sect which, although forming a majority of 'Iraq's population, has been unable even to the present day, to provide experienced officials to the same extent as the Sunnī sect, due to the reluctance of the sect to acquire secular education. Furthermore, the harmony of the Cabinets has not been enhanced by the inclusion of members of the mutually antagonistic sects.

It has been no secret that public opinion, its confidence shaken in the Council and in Parliament, has leaned increasingly towards Turkey and Kemal Atatürk as suitable models for 'Iraq. Many leading 'Iraqīs have expressed admiration openly for Atatürk, several politicians, including Yāsīn Pasha, being credited with personal desires to emulate his role.

The seizure of power by General Baqir Sidqī and Hikmat

[1] Three Ministries resigned rather than abandon the 'Iraqī viewpoint when it came into collision with that of the British Government: the second of Ja'far Pasha, January 7th, 1928; the third of 'Abdul Muhsin Beg, January 20th, 1929; and that of Nājī Pasha, March 9th, 1930.

[2] *Supra*, p. 422, note.

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645 Sulaimān, both ardent Turcophiles,[1] caused less resentment
669 than might have been supposed, in spite of the bombardment of Baghdad, the murder of Ja'far Pasha and of Dhia Yūnis,[2] Secretary of the former Council of Ministers, and the expulsions of many 'Iraqīs held to be capable of raising opposition.

645 Much favourable sentiment was won by the new Government
185 by its promises issued through the press,[3] and for the first time
[207] in the history of 'Iraq, by means of the radio[4]: distribution of land to the tribes and the *fallahīn* individually, amnesties,[5] freedom of the press[6] and of election, and by an all-inclusive programme of administrative reforms ranging from prisons to revenue collection. The promises, however, even if not cast into a twenty-five point programme, have the familiar ring of similar programmes advanced by other Governments to win popular support and to justify the means by which they have come to power.

645 The goodwill of H.B.M. Government has apparently been
648 won also by assurances of friendship to Great Britain and of loyalty to treaty relations as well as toleration for minorities,[7] although individual members of the new 'Iraq government have long been noted for their anti-British and anti-minority views. The new regime seems to have realized as have other 'Iraqī Governments in the past and as all others must in the future that, whatever the internal political changes, order must be maintained and that commerce, oil-production, and air-routes must not be disturbed.

[1] One of Hikmat Sulaimān's first official acts was to announce that he would visit Ankara to cement Turco-'Iraqī friendship and to observe Turkish reforms for possible introduction into 'Iraq.

[2] On the same day, January 21st, 1937, that Yāsin Pasha al-Hāshimī died suddenly of heart-failure in Beirūt.

[3] *The Times*, November 7th, 1936; *Al-Balāgh*, December 14th, 1936.

[4] November 5th, 1936, by Hikmat Sulaimān and Ja'far abū Timman.

[5] According to the *Palestine Post*, November 11th, 1936, 200 prisoners concerned in the tribal rebellions of 1935 were released.

[6] *Al-Ayyām*, November 10th, 1936, reported the appearance of six new journals in Baghdad. Four others, however, *At-Tariq*, *Al-'Uqāb*, *Al-Istiqlāl*, of Baghdad and *An-Nās*, of Basrah, were suspended later for periods ranging from 12 days to one year for articles in opposition to the new regime.

[7] See *The Times*, November 3rd, 5th, and 7th, 1936..

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forces might be stationed with immunity from local jurisdiction and taxation. The Treaty was badly received by the nationalists, but was ratified by the Assembly in November 1931. On 3 October 1932, on the strong recommendation of the British Government, Iraq was admitted to the League of Nations as an independent state.

The nationalist leaders, who were soon afterwards called to govern, disappointed their followers' hopes of quick internal development and a revision of the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty, but retained some popularity by their ruthless treatment of the Assyrian question in the absence and against the wishes of the ailing King. His untimely death a few months later (in September 1933) was an irreparable loss. Even his outstanding talents had been tried in maintaining a balance on the one hand between nationalism and friendship with Great Britain and on the other between the antagonistic elements in the country itself, and his son Ghazi, who succeeded him at the age of twenty-one, though popular as a strong Arab nationalist, was inexperienced and inadequately advised. From the first, government was conducted haltingly by faction-ridden Cabinets which succeeded one another in rapid succession. By 1935 the factions were provoking tribal revolt, which yielded only to determined military intervention, in order to displace their rivals from power, and disappointed politicians were directing against the inefficient, reactionary, and increasingly authoritarian Government an alliance of reformist intellectuals who inclined to socialist or liberal democracy and of nationalist young army officers who favoured military dictatorship in imitation of Kemalist Turkey. This combination was brought to power in 1936 through a military coup d'état executed by General Bakr Sidqi in collusion with Hikmat Sulaiman, an admirer of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk.

The movement ended within ten months as it had begun, in assassination and a military coup d'état. None of its pledges of reform had been fulfilled. Nationalists and reactionaries had neutralized and finally ousted the reformist elements, the army was divided, tribal chiefs alienated, popular liberties suppressed and a dangerous precedent set for military intervention in politics. In the following four years the army interfered time and again to secure the Government for rival politicians in the same factional politics of self-interest as had preceded the movement.

In foreign affairs the Government of this coup d'état had three treaties to its credit: a treaty of alliance with Saudi Arabia, a boundary treaty with Persia, and the Saadabad Pact between Turkey (the inspiring force), Persia, Iraq, and

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Afghanistan, which provided for consultation in all disputes that might affect the common interests of the four states.

Relations with Great Britain

During the period of independence the hostility of Iraqi nationalists towards Great Britain in no way diminished. The mandate had been replaced by a treaty that they had from the first opposed as denying full independence and their sentiments were strengthened by Syrian and Palestinian nationalists, deeply critical of British policy in Palestine, who took refuge in Iraq. A further stimulus was provided by Axis propaganda, which produced among nationalist groups not only hostility to Great Britain but a positive admiration for the totalitarian states. When King Ghazi killed himself in a motor accident in April 1939, to be succeeded by his infant son Faisal II, with the Amir Abdul-Ilah, Ghazi's cousin and brother-in-law, as Regent, there was a violent outburst of anti-British feeling in the belief that the accident was British-inspired.

Consequently, although the Iraqi Government severed diplomatic relations with Germany in September 1939, political opinion was divided on the measure of assistance to be granted to Great Britain under the Treaty; nationalists, especially in the all-important army, demanded non-belligerency and even the resumption of relations with Germany; and diplomatic relations with Italy were maintained. In 1941 the routine of political intrigue combined with nationalist and anti-British feeling and the effect of allied reverses, five years of Axis propaganda, and the presence of the Mufti of Jerusalem in Baghdad, to produce a chain of events which culminated in April 1941 in the last of the coups d'état. Rashid Ali al-Gailani seized power with the support of an army group more violently nationalist and anti-British than himself and formed a Government which was pledged to maintain Iraq's non-belligerency and displayed considerable sympathy towards the Axis. The Regent and several senior statesmen quitted the country. Relations were strained between the new Cabinet and the British Government, which was reluctant to recognize it, and on 2 May a disagreement over the passage of British troops through Iraq, on the basis of the Treaty, led to Anglo-Iraqi hostilities. These were terminated, after the introduction of further British forces and the Transjordan Arab Legion, on 29 May; by this time the Regent had returned to Iraq, the Rashid Ali Government had fled, and armistice negotiations were in progress. Shortly after the outbreak of Anglo-Iraqi hostilities the Iraqi Government had been in touch with

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German representatives for the provision of military aid. A number of aircraft were in fact dispatched with an advance party to Baghdad and Mosul and armaments were supplied by the Vichy Government of Syria, who also put its aerodromes at the disposal of German aircraft; but the coup was premature from the point of view of the German Command, whose forces were required for the immediate conquest of Crete and the all-essential invasion of the Soviet Union, and the assistance given was too late and limited to prevent collapse.

Succeeding Governments co-operated effectively with the Allied war effort, and Iraq became a base for operations against the Levant and Persia (1941) and for aid to Russia, and in January 1943 she declared war on the Axis Powers and signed the Declaration of the United Nations. In 1945 a rebellion of the Kurdish Barzani tribe, which had continued intermittently since 1943, was finally suppressed, and the rebels took refuge in the so-called Kurdish Republic of Mahabad (north-west Persia) which had newly been formed under Soviet inspiration, and, after its collapse, in the Soviet Union itself.

Relations with Other Middle East Countries

In 1945 Iraq signed the Arab League Pact, towards whose realization Nuri as-Said, Prime Minister from 1941 to 1944, played a leading part, though the Arab states rejected as premature his further proposal for the union of Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Jordan in one state. A project in 1946 for a close union between Iraq and Jordan was criticized both in the Arab League and in Iraq and Jordan, and was diluted into a treaty of alliance and eternal brotherhood between the two countries, which provided for consultation in the event of aggression by a third party and military intervention by one party to suppress disorders or rebellion in the other. In 1947, in spite of internal opposition, a treaty of friendship with Turkey was ratified. It was intended that Turkey should sign similar treaties with other Arab states to form a Middle East bloc in replacement of the moribund Saadabad Pact, but in the event Jordan was the only other state to sign.

In 1946 permission was given for the formation of political parties, of which none had existed since the mid-thirties. Licences were granted to five, of which two were subsequently suppressed, but were refused to the Communist groups, which continued to operate, as they had done both before and after their reinforcement in 1941, in secret. Though considerably weakened by official action against them in 1947, they are alleged to have played an active part in the disturbances at